

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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By: **Senators Brinkley, Astle, Colburn, Dyson, Giannetti, Greenip, Hafer, Haines, Hooper, Jacobs, Kittleman, Middleton, Miller, Mooney, Munson, and Stoltzfus**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2003

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Sustainable Forestry**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the Governor to direct the Secretary of Natural Resources
4 to take certain steps to provide certain incentives and relief to certain forestland
5 owners; acknowledging certain work performed by the State for certain
6 management and protection of public lands and endorsing certain efforts by the
7 Department of Natural Resources and the forest industry; providing that a copy
8 of this resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to
9 certain individuals; and generally relating to sustainable forestry.

10 WHEREAS, Careful stewardship of Maryland's forest resources is essential if
11 they are to continue to exist as an environmentally wise land use and if future
12 generations are to enjoy and prosper from them; and

13 WHEREAS, Marylanders treasure the State's forest resources, but relatively
14 few are aware of the valuable role that private landowners, the Maryland
15 Department of Natural Resources, and the State's forest products companies play
16 individually and collectively to ensure that forests remain as a barrier against
17 indiscriminate land use changes, as protection for wildlife habitat and watersheds,
18 and as sustainable sources of quality forest products for the marketplace; and

19 WHEREAS, More than 2.56 million acres, or 41 percent, of Maryland's
20 landscape are covered with forests; and

21 WHEREAS, Because of increasing growth and development Maryland's
22 forestlands have been lost by, and are still threatened with, conversion to other land
23 uses; and

24 WHEREAS, Intelligent and sustainable management and retention of these
25 forests is vital to the health and welfare of the people of Maryland; and

26 WHEREAS, Approximately 130,600 private landowners in Maryland own and
27 manage 76 percent of the State's forests, resulting in major societal benefits to all
28 Marylanders, and as such should be rewarded with incentives for maintaining these
29 forests; and

1 WHEREAS, State agencies responsible for the management and protection of
2 approximately 375,000 acres of public land have for nearly 100 years demonstrated
3 the professional and scientific ability to be true stewards of the State's natural
4 resources by providing diverse habitat for wildlife, ensuring adequate protection for
5 sensitive areas including existing and potential old growth forests, protecting vital
6 watersheds, preventing soil erosion, and providing recreational opportunities for
7 millions of visitors while at the same time providing quality forest products to the
8 marketplace on a sustainable basis; and

9 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland has demonstrated its strong and continuing
10 commitment to sustainable forestry through its pursuit of third party certification;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, A viable forest products industry offers a market for forest
13 landowners thereby providing an essential financial incentive for those landowners to
14 retain their land in forests in face of development pressures; and

15 WHEREAS, To ensure corporate sustainability, the industry acts as responsible
16 stewards of the forest resources through the adoption of best management practices,
17 the Maryland Master Logger program, and other industry-sponsored programs such
18 as the Sustainable Forest Initiatives (SFI); now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
20 General Assembly recognizes the commitment to the responsible use of forest
21 resources and the vital services provided by the private forestland owners of
22 Maryland, the State agencies responsible for the management and protection of
23 public forestlands, and the forest products industry; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly believes that voluntary leadership by
25 private forestland owners, the State government, and the forest products industry is
26 the best way to ensure that productive and economically viable environmental
27 stewardship is sustained on the public and private forests throughout Maryland; and
28 be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly urges the Governor to direct the
30 Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to take all legal and necessary
31 steps to encourage private forestland owners to be responsible stewards of their land
32 by providing to them incentives and relief from unnecessary regulations as a way of
33 offsetting pressures on them to sell their land for development; and be it further

34 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly acknowledges the credible work
35 performed by the State of Maryland in carrying out its responsibilities for the
36 management and protection of public lands for all their benefits, including the
37 production of forest products, wildlife, fish, biodiversity, sensitive habitats, water and
38 recreation; and endorses the Department of Natural Resources' efforts to do so within
39 the framework of the sound science of sustainable forest management by pursuing
40 third party certification of the State's forests; and be it further

41 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly acknowledges and supports the forest
42 industry as a viable economic contributor to the financial welfare of the State and

1 recognizes the invaluable part the industry plays in the retention of the State's
2 forestland base by providing forestland owners with a return on their woodland
3 investment through the sale of forest products; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
5 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
6 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; the
7 Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and the Honorable
8 Ronald Franks, Secretary-designee of the Department of Natural Resources and the
9 Secretary of the Department of the Environment.